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**iPrint: Self-Service Printing**  
(iPrint.com, self-service print shop on Internet with annual revenues of \$1 mil+, was ranked 15th on Information Week's E-Business 100; commercial and quick printing market in US had sales of \$105.5 bil)  
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## ABSTRACT:

iPrint.com, a self-service print shop on the Internet with annual revenues of \$1 mil+, was ranked 15th on Information Week's E-Business 100. The site allows users to design and order personalized business cards, checks, stationery, sticky notes, rubber stamps, labels and novelty gifts. iPrint can cut prepress costs by 25-50% below retail because it reduces error rates and eliminates steps that are required at the retail level. The commercial and quick printing market in the US had sales of \$105.5 bil in 1998. The company received \$31 mil in venture capital. The company believes the majority of its income will come from outsourcing its technology to others, not necessarily from orders themselves.

## TEXT:

By: Eric Chabrow

A year ago, Janine Ciffone's job as financial officer at the NASA Ames Research Center exchange near Mountain View, Calif., required her to spend eight hours a week processing business-card orders for space agency engineers and scientists. "It was a pain in the neck," she recalls. Today, through a link on a NASA intranet, the 1,500 Ames employees can go to a Web site to design, order, and pay for the cards themselves-freeing Ciffone from the time-consuming task.

The link from the NASA intranet takes employees to iPrint.com, an Internet self-service print shop formed three years ago by software industry executive Royal Farros.

iPrint-No. 15 on the InformationWeek E-Business 100-lets customers design, proofread, and order personalized business cards, stationery, checks, rubber stamps, sticky notes, labels, and novelty gifts such as golf balls and coffee mugs. iPrint customers can also import graphics as well as adjust layouts, fonts, and ink colors to customize print products. iPrint doesn't do its own printing but transmits orders over the Internet to commercial printers to be fulfilled. Customers usually receive the finished products within a week.

With brick-and-mortar print shops, customers fill out order sheets, often on paper, so the ability to automate the prepress process-which accounts for up to half of all printing costs-and deliver detailed orders over the Internet to commercial printers is at the heart of iPrint's business. Because the prepress process involves as many as 50 tasks, the traditional approach is prone to human error; printers, for instance, can incorrectly decipher bad handwriting on an order faxed to them. The error rate for

traditional print jobs is 10% to 15% vs. 1% to 2% for iPrint, Farros says.

Reducing prepress costs lets iPrint price products at 25% to 50% below retail. "If most orders didn't go through untouched, it wouldn't be possible to scale as fast as we are and deliver the prices we offer," Farros says.

Sales last year topped \$1 million, a minute fraction of the \$105.5 billion in U.S. commercial and quick printing sales. However, iPrint's revenue continues to grow exponentially; the company received 50,000 orders in October.

iPrint, which has received \$31 million in venture capital, markets print products that can be easily produced, avoiding complex jobs that require thousands of printed copies and cost thousands of dollars. A typical iPrint order comes from a small business and costs \$55 to \$70. "We love short-run, mass-market items because those products are well-suited for the self-service process," Farros says.

As iPrint grows, it expects to generate most of its revenue not from direct Internet sales, but by outsourcing its technology to printers, office-supply retailers, and other businesses. Companies such as Kinko's, Office Max, and Sir Speedy outsource their online printing services to iPrint.

iPrint has also entered into a number of Web partnerships. An agreement with Internet portal Excite.com lets users order free business cards when they sign up for E-mail service. iPrint also discounts printing services through portals aimed at small businesses such as FreeAgent.com and AllBusiness.com.

Cary Sherburne, a director at CAP Ventures, a business communications consulting firm, calls iPrint the leader in the emerging online print market. "What Royal Farros has done is build a proven, scalable model that is able to handle tens of thousands of orders a month," Sherburne says. "His template approach has taken the uncertainty out of process. It's the next level of automation."

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At A Glance

iPrint.com

Redwood City, Calif.

www.iprint.com

industry: Printing services

annual revenue: More than \$1 million

Employees: 150

Key E-business initiatives; Self-service online print shop; iKiosk, private-label Internet print service operated for commercial printers, quick printing chains

DATA: IPRINT.COM

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COMPANY NAMES: IPRINT COM INC

PRODUCT NAMES: Commercial printing (275000)

CONCEPT TERMS: All company; All market information; Company forecasts;  
Corporate strategy; E-Commerce; Market size; Outsourcing; Sales;  
Capitalization

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: North America (NOAX); United States (USA)

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